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Letter dated 13 October 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a copy of the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 13 October 2006, on the adoption of Security Council resolution 1716 (2006) on Georgia (see annex). I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 13 October 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On 13 October 2006, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1716, which extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 15 April 2007.

This resolution whose draft was elaborated under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary-General's Group of Friends constitutes a highly significant document, which strongly and unequivocally reaffirms the principle of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

In this context, the Security Council reiterates its unequivocal support for the principles of conflict resolution contained in the "Paper on Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi". The reference is made to the so-called "Boden Document" stipulating that the status of Abkhazia be defined exclusively within Georgia, which automatically rules out any kind of manipulation around this problem. It is noteworthy that the Security Council welcomes additional ideas that the sides would be willing to offer with a view to conducting a political dialogue under the aegis of the United Nations.

These urges of the Security Council are perfectly in tune with the Georgian side's new initiatives aimed at activating the peace process, which envisage a direct dialogue between the conflicting sides, use of the already existing but not yet applied mechanisms of the international organizations, including under the United Nations aegis, modification of the peace operation format through internationalization, and in case all these conditions are met, readiness to sign the agreement on non-use of violence between the sides.

The Security Council once again urged the Abkhaz side to address seriously the need for a safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees. It needs to be underlined that repatriation, according to the resolution, should take place throughout the whole territory of Abkhazia and be paralleled by adequate protection of human rights, including residency rights and identity. The Abkhaz side was tasked to move without delay on implementing commitments of the previous resolutions relating to the deployment of United Nations police components, setting up of a human rights sub-office and ensuring native language instruction for local Georgian population.

The resolution of the United Nations Security Council makes mention of the police operation carried out by the Georgian side in Upper Abkhazia (Kodori Valley).

It is of interest that in the final text of the resolution the Security Council did not share the rigid and aggressive position of the Russian side insisting that nearly all acts of the Georgian side be condemned unconditionally.

Provisions set forth in the adopted resolution point to the fact that the Security Council objects to growth of tension or mutual distrust in the conflict zone, hence the sides should refrain from taking steps involving potential risk.

In this context, we emphasize that the resolution unequivocally recognizes that a new reality has emerged as a result of the Kodori operation. The Security Council notes with satisfaction the resumption of patrols in the Kodori Valley, which serve the implementation of provisions of the previous resolutions 1462 and 1494 (2003), 1524 and 1554 (2004), 1582 and 1615 (2005). As it is known, patrolling in this zone was impossible from 2003 due to the absence of security guarantees and raids of criminal elements thriving in the Kodori Valley. It is only after the reinstatement of constitutional order and the rule of law in this zone as a result of the police operation that the Georgian side became able to provide observers with security guarantees and resume monitoring of the zone.

The security guarantees provided by the Georgian side allowed the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia and the CIS peacekeeping forces to conduct patrol in Upper Abkhazia on 12 October 2006. As it was anticipated, observers detected no serious violations, which indicates again the Georgian side complies with utmost accuracy with the commitments undertaken by it.

As for the issue of CIS peacekeepers indicated in the Security Council's resolution, there can be no doubt that the Georgian authorities will act within the limits of their sovereign rights, in line with the views voiced in remarks of the President of Georgia at the sixty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly and in compliance with the resolutions of the Parliament of Georgia. It should be clear to all that the Georgian side will adopt relevant measures in due course and circumstances to tackle the tasks it is facing and ensure modification of the peace operation format and replacement of the existing contingent by the international forces.

In addition it should be noted that by the initiative of the GUAM member States, protracted conflicts were included into the work programme of the sixty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, which allows us to focus the international community's attention on this problem and thus facilitate resolution of these conflicts.

We would like to reiterate with a sense of gratitude the decisively positive role of the United Nations Secretary-General's Group of Friends — representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France, whose efforts translated into the adoption of this constructive and well-balanced document. A particular mention, in this context, should be made of a considerable contribution of the non-permanent members of the Security Council with whom the Georgian side was involved in intensive consultations and whose constructive position we duly appreciate.

Tbilisi, 13 October 2006